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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USNATO 000442

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [NATO](#) [AF](#) [RS](#)  
SUBJECT: NATO-RUSSIA: ALLIES FOCUS ON SUBSTANCE WHILE  
RUSSIA AIMS ELSEWHERE

REF: A. USNATO 400  
[1](#)B. USNATO 432

Classified By: Charge John Heffern for reasons 1.4 (b/d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: NATO Allies and Russia displayed dramatically different views on how to take the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) forward during a recent Ambassadorial meeting. Allies focused on immediate, practical goals for the organization, while the Russian Ambassador to NATO presented an unrealistically long list of items he hoped the NRC would address. NATO PermReps discussed parameters for a joint review of common threats proposed by the Secretary General, and how to restructure the NRC into a more effective organization focused on practical areas of NATO-Russia cooperation. Ambassador Daalder suggested enlarging the joint assessment if conditions were right. In contrast, Russian Ambassador Rogozin proposed that the NRC do everything from address cyber and energy security issues to produce a glossary of political-military terms, while sticking to Moscow's instructions to limit NRC restructuring. NATO PermReps warned against the NRC taking on Rogozin's list of issues, most of which appear not to have been blessed by Moscow. This divergence in approaches demonstrates that it will be necessary to convince Rogozin to limit his ambitions at the same time we convince Moscow to work with NATO to make the NRC more effective. End summary.

Allies Focus on Taking the NRC Forward  
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[1](#)2. (C) NATO Secretary General Rasmussen opened an informal NRC Ambassadorial meeting on October 5 by highlighting his recent speech on enhancing NATO-Russia relations by making the NRC an "all weather body" that could undertake practical cooperation and discuss issues of disagreement (ref A). The SecGen focused on his proposal to conduct with Russia a review of common threats and asked that NRC Ambassadors agree on the broad parameters for this project. Ambassador Daalder and other Allied PermReps were supportive of the SecGen's initiative, but were quick to bring the discussion back to the immediate issues facing the NRC, particularly the need to restructure the organization and make it more results oriented. Allies agreed to combine existing working groups into larger committees with flexible mandates. Several Allies were open to forming an Afghanistan working group within the NRC, although consensus on this point was not reached. Allies welcomed the discussion of controversial topics in the NRC, but noted the need to include them on the agenda and not leave it to Russia to raise them unannounced.

## Rogozin Rambles, Makes No Friends

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13. (C) Russian Ambassador Rogozin departed from the precedent set by Allied PermReps to make brief statements focused on the immediate issues facing the NRC, and launched a lengthy monologue laying out numerous new areas for NATO-Russia cooperation. He began by noting that this informal NRC Ambassadorial brought together PermReps who often "play hooky" rather than attend the formal NRC meetings, then observed that NATO-Russia relations were "lagging behind" U.S.-Russia relations and expressed his desire to bring NATO-Russia "up to speed."

14. (C) Rogozin touched briefly upon NRC restructuring, reiterating that Russia was against eliminating any existing NRC committees and believed that forming an Afghanistan working group was important for both political discussions and practical cooperation (ref B). He proposed that a future NRC meeting discuss the threat from Afghan narcotics, at which Russia could brief on the CSTO's counter-narcotics program Operation Channel. The NRC could also hold an experts level meeting on clandestine activity in Afghanistan, where valuable information from Russia and CIS countries could be provided to NATO. Rogozin repeated Russia's request to be included in meetings of the ISAF "suppliers' group", citing existing Russian support to ISAF. (Note: Exactly what forum Russia wants to be a part of remains unclear. End note.) He offered to arrange a meeting between Gen. McChrystal and General Boris Gromov, former commander of

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Soviet troops in Afghanistan, arguing that Russia had a lot to share with NATO. Rogozin reiterated Russian support for the successful completion of ISAF's mission in Afghanistan; otherwise Russia would have to "shoulder the burden itself."

15. (C) Rogozin expressed strong support for the joint threat review, and proposed that it go further than the SecGen proposed, citing the need for Russia to understand how NATO intends to tackle non-traditional threats such as cyber and energy security, the impact of climate change, and Arctic issues. He said Russia would like to send experts to NATO to consult on renewing cooperation in theater missile defense and the potential for a linked NATO-Russia missile defense system. Rogozin called for increased cooperation on nuclear issues, specifically nonproliferation and protecting against nuclear accidents, and suggested that Russian naval vessels in the Gulf of Aden cooperate with NATO by sharing information necessary to fight piracy.

16. (C) Rogozin asked for a briefing on the NATO strategic concept, and thought the panel of experts led by Secretary Albright should meet with Moscow's think tank community. He called for a discussion of the European Security Treaty in the NRC, questioned the OSCE's ability to handle this task, and argued that if this issue "is very important for Russia it is important for the NRC."

Allies Want Quick Wins for the NRC

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17. (C) Allied PermReps raised some of the following points:

-- Czech Republic: Posited that we need some "quick wins" that demonstrate the NRC's effectiveness, such as implementing an Afghan lethal transit arrangement with Russia.

-- Estonia: Stressed that his country "really" did want a good relationship with Russia, requiring concrete results from the NRC. Therefore, he was hesitant for the NRC to take on certain global issues that promised to be contentious and find difficulty navigating interagency processes in NRC capitals.

-- Germany: Called for the resumption of NATO-Russia military cooperation and pressed for completion of a MOU between NAMSA and Russia. Suggested NATO and Russia cooperate more closely on Russian logistical support for ISAF and intelligence sharing.

-- Hungary: Asked Rogozin to work with Allied PermReps to help improve NATO's image in Russia.

-- Latvia: Warned against embarking on a "roller coaster ride" of heightened expectations for the NRC that would only be met by meager results, and suggested that a solid record of achievement was better than an ever expanding agenda.

-- Lithuania: Called for a "business like" approach to the NRC and reminded the assembled PermReps not to ignore Russian noncompliance with its international commitments.

-- Poland: Reiterated the need to support the Civil Airspace Initiative (CAI) and suggested a briefing on the project at a future Ambassadorial.

-- UK: Borrowed language from a recent joint U.S., UK, French, and Norwegian non-paper on improving the NRC to remind colleagues that the NRC should work from the principles of pragmatism, equality, and balance, which meant that activities should benefit all 29 NRC members, require all to take part in the work of the council in a substantive manner, and have an appropriate distribution between working visits and practical exchanges.

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